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FILM CULTURE

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REUBEN

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KENNETH ANGER AND PAUL JOHNSTON

Paul Johnston, a Woodstock artist, designer and typographer (author of Typographical Bibliography*), and a resident of New York for many decades, spent most of his New York life at Avantgarde film screenings. The correspondence printed in the following pages is from the "PJ" (as he prefers to be known) Collection at Anthology Film Archives.*

13 November, 1947

Dear Kenneth Anger,

It seems like a long time since Mr. Willis of Cinema Magazine gave me your name and told me that you are making films that might interest me. He didn't have your address, and now, after all I have that from Curtis Harrington.

The enclosed circulars will tell of you my project . . . Two things are to be added. First I will have to ask any film-maker who is willing to let me show his pictures to give me first public showing rights in this city. Second I can offer a better royality than that stated in the circular. I will pay at least 70 cents per minute of screen time per evening of showing, possibly more.

If you feel like letting me back your films on this basis I would be glad to hear from you. A showing at the San Francisco Museum of Art qualifies a film for me as far as its desirability is concerned.

Aside from this—are you interested in selling a print of your films to a private collector?

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.

Kenneth Anger,
Hollywood.

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20 XI 1947

Dear Mr. Johnston,

I was very pleased to receive your letter informing me of your Cinearts Theatre in New York. I certainly wish you success with your project, and I believe you are to be congratulated for the courage in undertaking such an enterprise.

We experimental film makers are very thankful for the existence of such theatres as yours, devoted to film as art, and handling the 16mm product, as they constitute practically the only means for our works to reach the public.

Thank you for your interest in my films. The stipulations you indicated regarding rental of films I find agreeable.

I would be most happy for you to have first showing rights for my films in your city. However, I feel I will have to have a definite booking date from you before I can hold up my films for your showing.

Three of my films are now available for booking: ESCAPE EPISODE, DRASTIC DEMISE, and FIREWORKS.

ESCAPE EPISODE had its premiere showing at the Coronet Theatre in Hollywood, October 26 of this year, and was presented by the Art in Cinema Society at the San Francisco Museum of Art November 7.

This film is an experimental study in conflict of moral values, following closely the psychological state of mind of the protagonist, a young girl. The film becomes increasingly subjective in treatment as the climax is reached and the conflict is exposed, taking the audience from a solid, "real" time-space relationship in the beginning to the unreality of the mind of the protagonist at the conclusion.

DRASTIC DEMISE is a short film dealing with a subjective reaction to the end of the war. In it negative and positive film are used for their moral implication. This film has an original score for percussion instruments.

FIREWORKS has not, as yet, been shown publicly, although it has been reviewed in Los Angeles by private groups, including a meeting of doctors and psychiatrists.

This film is a study in the use of the shock-image. It deals with the self-named outcast, the "wild beast" that is hunted through the night. This film is recommended only to adult audiences.

I will be glad to furnish you with additional material on these films, as well as stills, if you desire me to do so.

Again, good luck in your venture, and I am most anxious to cooperate with you in any way possible.

Sincerely yours,

[signed] Kenneth Anger.

24 November, 1947

Dear Kenneth Anger,

The difficulty that I have had in planning a program of films is the difficulty of getting a film-maker, like you to hold a film for my booking until I can get other films, organize a program, and arrange for a theatre. For instance I started last spring corresponding with a fellow on the coast and, after many weeks, I came to the conclusion that I would show his film. I thought he was holding it for me and that when I got a program together I would book it. Meanwhile he was approached by another exhibitor who booked and exhibited the film. Thus I was set back because I would not make a program out of odds and ends that I could pick up quickly using one film such as yours to give the program some class, but I waited to find other films that were worthy of showing . . . Now you say you will not hold your film for my booking. At least we have an understanding.

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Supposing I should send you a check for one night's showing. Would that make it possible for you to hold your film until I can get a total program and a theatre.

There are two other films that I have tentatively planned to show and these, with yours, would make one program. When I have definite commitments from these two people I could set a date.

One West Coast film-maker is sending me his film for preview and I will have it shown at The Museum of Modern Art so that they can preview it at the same time. I could do the same with your film. If your films have not been seen by The Museum it might be well to do this.

Another detail: I very much respect your feeling that your films should be shown without cuts, or not shown. But, while I am not intending to have any but a very select adult audience it will probably be necessary for me to have the film licensed for showing here. So any booking agreement I had with you would have to be predicated on my ability to get a license.

It is probable that if I can get a program I can run it at least eight evenings. But I will be unable to get a theatre for more than two nights a week, possibly only one night. How will you feel about this?

My intentions are good but there are many difficulties that I have to overcome in order to get films and show them. Without the cooperation of such film-makers as you I cannot hope to make a success of this project.

Yours Faithfully,

Kenneth Anger, Hollywood.

P.S. If your films have not been seen by The Museum of Modern Art it might be well to send all three to me for preview and I am certain that Mr. Knight will be interested enough to be glad to have me bring them to the Museum for preview. I will take the responsibility of getting them back to you promptly, and pay the cost, of course. This would settle many points. It might be possible to get definite answers as to whether the films could be exhibited without cuts.

PJ

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January 5 1948

Dear Mr. Johnston:

In reply to your telegram, which I have just received:

I am reserving a print of my film ESCAPE EPISODE for your showing beginning February 8.

These are the pertinent facts in regard to ESCAPE EPISODE:

Black and White—Sound on Film
Running Time—30 minutes
Rental per day—$20.00

I wish it were possible for me to ship my film to you immediately for review, but unfortunately a number of showings have been scheduled in the near future on the West Coast. If it is necessary for me to ship the film to you by air express in order to meet your booking date, I will be glad to meet the charges over the regular express rate.

Before I can sign up with you for this showing, however, it will be necessary for me to know the *minimum number of showings scheduled,* and also the approximate length of time that the film will be out of my hands. Please write me as soon as possible about this.

I have publicity material and stills available for this film if you need them. Please advise me about this in your letter.

I am very happy that at last definite plans have developed for a showing for your Cinearts Theatre. I wish you all success and offer my services in any way that I may be of help.

Good Luck!

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Kenneth Anger

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9 January, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

Thank you for your prompt reply to my telegram and your willingness to reserve Escape Episode for my showing. I will be glad to have it if mine will be its first appearance in New York, as far as public exhibition is concerned. If my statements in answer to you inquiries are acceptable to you I hope you will assure me by return mail that I may count on the film and that I will be its first public exhibitor in New York.

The minimum number of showings scheduled will be four. This will be two a day, for two days. If it is possible for me to hold the film and run it four times a week until the demand is exhausted I would prefer to take it on this basis. On this basis I think that it would be shown no less than eight days in four weeks, and possibly run on, two days a week, for four or six weeks more . . . But as to payment: your rate of $20.00 per day is more than my offered 50 plus for each minute of screen time. However I will not only gladly pay you your rate, forwarding you my check for $40.00 on confirmation of the booking, but I may be able to offer you a bonus as well. More of that later.

Further—I am trying to get a larger theatre which might enable me to exhibit two more nights a week, and this would double the yield of your film while it is in my hands, and if I can get this other theatre there will be a substantial bonus because this is a larger theatre.

At any rate I would forward you a check in advance for each week's showing and return the film promptly after the last showing.

Please do not ship the film by express if you can possibly mail it. I find express most unreliable and, this week, it took me three days to get a film out of their clutches. If you send it by express address it to me personally at 508 West 26th Street, third floor. Give the express company specific instructions to deliver it to whoever will sign for it. This is the office of my personal work and there it can be received even if I am not present. It appears that if the express company can find the slightest excuse they will not deliver a shipment.

PRICE LIST 20 Feb 47

	Rental per day	Sale Price
ESCAPE EPISODE (30 minutes)	$ 20.00	$ 100.00
DRASTIC DEMISE (6 minutes)	$ 5.00	$ 25.00
FIREWORKS (17 minutes)	$ 15.00	not for sale

All films are black and white, sound on film.

These films are released for public showing only on the condition that they be presented in their entirety, without being cut or altered in any way.

[redacted]

WESTERN UNION (14)

SYMBOLS
DL=Day Letter
NL=Night Letter
LC=Deferred Cable
NLT=Cable Night Letter

N13 17 COLLECT=LOSANGELES CALIF 7 535A 1948 FEB 7 AM

PAUL JOHNSTON= 258

CINEARTS THEATRE 128 WEST 10 ST=

DO YOU WANT EXCLUSIVE PREMIER FIRST ABSOLUTE FILM "META-IRONY" DEDICATED TO MARCEL DUCHAMP CONFIDENTIAL WIRE IMMEDIATELY=

KENNETH ANGER.

"META-IRONY"

PAUL JOHNSTON

No. 1203

NEW YORK 15 Jan. 1948 1-106/210

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Kenneth Anger $40.00

Forty Dollars DOLLARS

TITLE GUARANTEE AND TRUST COMPANY
6 EAST 45TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y

Paul Johnston

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But if you cannot ship the film at least a week in advance I am afraid I cannot rely on receiving it. By this I mean that you would have to ship on 1 February, by air. In that case I guess I could count on having it for showing.

Please send stills and publicity material.

Sincerely,

Paul Johnston.

January 13, 1948

Dear Mr. Johnston:

In reply to your letter of January 9:

Your presentation of Escape Episode will be the first public exhibition of this film in New York. No other showing for your city is scheduled at this time.

I am in accord with the plan of exhibition as stated in your letter, and I understand that upon receipt of this letter as confirmation of the booking, you will advance me your check for $40.00 for the first two days showing, and that if there are continued showings, you will forward me a check in advance for each subsequent week.

I will ship Escape Episode via express to you at the address you listed in your letter, allowing ample time for the film to be in your hands at least two days before the scheduled booking date, February 8.

I will send you stills and publicity material for Escape Episode in the next few days.

If you are planning on having announcements or programs printed for your showing, I would appreciate a copy as soon as they are available.

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You might like my opinion regarding the order in which Escape Episode might best fit in with other films on your program. Due to Escape Episode's intense, subjectively dramatic nature, it has been found advisable to either run it before an intermission, or to have it shown to conclude the program. *I would definitely prefer the latter.* In this way the film was presented at the Coronet Theater and at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

Please let me know if I can assist you in any further way.

Sincerely yours,

[signed] Kenneth Anger

15 January, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

However exasperating it may be to you to have me continue to quibble I find that I cannot yet come to terms with you. I'll try to abbreviate this letter as much as possible because I am certain that you are not interested in the difficulties that I am having in starting my theatre. But these are partly due to inexperience and partly to the nature of the material in which I am interested and the comparatively small remuneration that can be expected by those I would work with.

However, my decision to continue the project was taken when, after three programs had been advertised by Cinema Sixteen, and it became apparent that, since they are showing many other sorts of films and scarcely any of the films that I am interested in, there is still room in this city for a theatre devoted exclusively to the work of such artists as yourself. And this has been the basis of my interest from the first.

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When I began to promote my theatre I thought that I would have to have commitments weeks in advance of showing date in order to take care of the details that must preceed showing. Working this way I lost three films and my theatre. So I tried establishing an exhibition date and collecting fims to fill it. I have failed in this effort and I find that my first direction was the right one for me.

The films must be reviewed not only by me, to see that I am not contracting for inferior work (but yours are qualified by having been exhibited in San Francisco), but by the State Licensing board. In New York State this is the board of censors. In order to present a program with any chance of public acceptance I must have it organized no less than five weeks before the exhibition date. I do not have to hold the films for this period, but I have to see them and they have to be licensed, five weeks before I can show them.

So now I am in a jam and will probably have to postpone my starting date.

Already two of the film-makers on the Coast have given me up, for the time being at least. I just have to accept this and work with those who are willing to cooperate.

Remember, and respecting what you have said about cutting your films, I could not advertise it until it is licensed, for if the board of censors would not pass it I simply would not show it, rather than even suggest that you cut it.

Is there now any way that I can plan to show Escape Episode? If not could I get one of the other films in time to exhibit in late February?

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston

Kenneth Anger, Hollywood.

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21 I 48

Dear Mr. Johnston:

I was sorry to learn of the necessity of postponing your opening date.

May I offer you a word of advice: You say that in the past you have lost films because you did not set an exhibition date. Recently you set an exhibition date, but apparently did not set it far enough in advance to carry out all the necessary details. May I suggest a compromise position?

You cannot expect any film maker to hold his work for your release unless you have a definite booking date, at least if you do not pay them in advance.

The Advance Guard Cinema Movement will ultimately owe its existence to the sucess or failure of such a project as yours. The artist working in cinema is in a difficult position due to the expense of the medium, and cannot hope to continue work, except on a sporadic basis, without some organized release and renumeration for his efforts.

So please don't let these initial set-backs discourage you about your project. I feel your theater can play a very important role as a premiere house for important new experimental work, if only on the basis of occasional showings.

Please advise me immediately if you want me to send ESCAPE EPISODE to you so that you can have it reviewed and licensed for public showing. I have a silent print of the picture which is now available for review purposes, since I cannot spare the sound print for the time necessary for review. As the track is composed of music and sound effects, there is no reason for it to be reviewed from a censorship angle.

I understand that you are intending to show "Psyche," the film by Gregory Markopoulos. I would be very interested to know whether this film is passed by the State Licensing board for public showing.

Could you also advise me as soon as possible as to what films will be shown with mine on the opening program?

Yours very sincerely,

[Signed] Kenneth Anger

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23 January, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

Thank you for the encouragement of offering to send Escape Episode. Here is my check for $40.00 which covers two nights showing but is more a token of good faith than a binder. I presume you will not wish to retain the money if the license board demands changes. But if your film passes I am quite sure that I can get other films and put on a show in the not too distant future.

Please think seriously about having me as your distributor. I am developing one contact which may yield immediate returns of remuneration. I have still another idea for developing the sale of films to owners of projectors. . . The program will take time and nothing has ever discouraged me but my inability to gain the confidence of a few of the film-makers. It may be another year, or more, before I can offer substantial inducements, but I think that film-makers will learn, in time, that the man who is interested in the art, more than turning a quick buck, who doesn't need to borrow ideas, who will be able to impress the critics and public by waiting until he has material which will impress them, is the one who will be most valuable to them.

About censorship: Regardless of how the film maker feels about it I will not show any film that, in my opinion, would be artisticly hurt by changes demanded by the license board. . . A way may be eventually worked out so that the films of artists may legally be exhibited without license by the board. But meanwhile I will have to work within the law.

Before Psyche was submitted for license I had written to G. M. some criticism of his film from the artistic point of view. I told him that I would show the film without change if it was as he wanted it but I thought it could be improved. He took the criticism seriously and with good nature and agreed to the changes that I had outlined. Meanwhile the license board had seen the film and reported that the entire passage that I had criticised must be cut. What I had found guache and vulgar they labeled obscene and indecent. I went down to have a talk with the license board director. I was able to show him the correspondence and he agreed that only the changes that I had suggested for artistic reasons might be enough to remove the charge. The board also demands that

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the kissing shots be abbreviated. I think this can be done without hurting the film.

It seemed to me that G. M. had not achieved, in the whole film the fine subtle quality he had aimed for and that sometimes his inability made a shot comic, other times vulgar. My chief criticism was of the sequence that led up to the shots of the head in ecstasy. I felt that the elimination of the man's approach, and possibly the nude figure turning over, would immeasurably enhance the artistic value of the head shot. G. M. felt that this was right. And it is probable that these changes will be made, the kissing shortened, and the film passed and exhibited.

Now if this were painting, or sculpture I would say that a person look at it and like it, or leave it. . . But film is more plastic than these mediums. The artist can work on it again and again, cutting it and moulding it, until at last it reaches the perfection he desires. One day he may feel that he has finished the film. When he sees it again he may change his mind. Film is continuously alive.

Thus I have felt that I was serving G. M. best by criticising his film. If he could not have accepted my criticism I would have been glad to show the film as he made it, if it could be licensed without cuts that would spoil its integrity. I feel that the film would be hurt by the expurgation of that entire passage.

Next week I am making a trip to Chicago and I will stop off at Toledo to meet G. M. We still have the opportunity of discussing all of these details.

Send Escape Episode so that it will reach me about Monday, 4 (?) February. I will see that it is reviewed during that week. It is probable that I will have to submit the sound version when I receive it but if they pass it in silent they will surely pass it with music and sound effects.

Just today things look very good for my project. You will know, in due time, what is happening. . . Think seriously about letting me have distribution of Escape and your other films.

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston

K. A. Hollywood.

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I 29 48

Dear Mr. Johnston:

I have just today returned from Santa Barbara, where I have been busy shooting for the last few days for my new film, THE PUCE WOMEN.

I found your letter with the check enclosed waiting for me, and as you requested, I have dispatched the review print of ESCAPE EPISODE to you.

A few words about this print: The print I have sent you is the so-called laboratory "answer" print, which has been used for the synchronization of the sound track, accounting for the occasional white marks that flash by. Also, this print does not have the final laboratory light corrections, which affects the technical quality somewhat.

Aside from this, this print represents *absolutely the final cutting,* and I do not intend to alter it in any way.

Please return the print at your earliest convenience following its review.

I am holding your check until I hear from you regarding a play date for the film.

Yours sincerely,

[signed] Kenneth Anger

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30 January, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

Thanks for getting Escape Episode off to me. . . It so happens that I did not go to Chicago this week which dissapoints me mainly because I cannot see G. M. It is possible that I may go next week, so do not be surprised if you get some ridiculous communication from the Railway Express saying that I do not exist or that I have dropped dead. If you sent the film to 508 West 26 St. it should be received and held for me until I return. If to this address it must be held by the R.E. until I return and pick it up.

You remember that I mentioned that I could show this film to Mr. Knight at the Museum of Modern Art. Would you care to have me do so.

Let me know how far I may go in using it to promote other outlets than that of exhibition. Of course I would do nothing without correspondence and understanding with you but there is an outlet that might possibly book about twenty screenings that would yield you $25.00 or more per. This would involve my showing it to the prospects and I would not do that, of course, without your permission, and if they are interested I would not come to terms with them without first coming to an understanding with you.

If your film can be licensed (and everything but one depends on that) I will still need at least one, possibly two films before I can make a program. But you are not obligated to wait until I can show it. You are free to do as you think best when I let you know the possibilities.

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.

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2 II 48

Dear Mr. Johnston:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my telegram. Here is an outline of the film project:

An investigation of the creative process as it is manifested in today's society. Running time: 25 minutes.

The crisis and the necessity for immediate action is instigated by the fact that the artist with whom I will be working is becoming destroyed by the very work by which he lived—the vision is too clear.

I must record that vision now, and equal it with the clarity of film.

But there is no time to lose, I have been given a week, and at the end of that time both the protagonist and his work may be destroyed.

Certainly $25.00 is an insignificant amount. Yet it will buy 3 rolls of color negative, a substantial part of the film's totality. My money is completely tied up in my past film projects and certainly this is not the time for me to be stepping into new film projects.

Yet the situation will not wait—it is clearly a case of "now or never."

If you feel able to forward me the $25.00 I will undoubtedly be able to repay you within three months time, if for some reason you do not wish to apply it for rental on ESCAPE EPISODE.

I would appreciate your keeping this project confidential for the time being.

Thanking you very sincerely,

[signed] Kenneth Anger

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3 February, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

Maybe I'm to much of a pragmatist too take seriously the idea of the possibility of an artist being destroyed by the work by which he lived, but it does give me a lift to be even pragmatically a part of such a fantastic enterprise... I only hope that this reaches you before the vision fades... And however lightly I seem to take it believe me I'll look forward to the outcome with the greatest of interest.

The film is for fantasy, I feel, and not for reality except in that reality is sometimes fantastic... Make it good.

Escape Episode reached me today. I will exhibit it for myself within a day or so, and I may at the same time show it to Mr. Knight at The Museum of Modern Art. I do not yet have your permission for this but I trust it will be forthcoming. I would rather wait for it than look at the film first by myself, that is, if I am going to show it to him. (You can see that I am thinking, stumblingly, to myself now)... If, after I see it, I think it will be passed by the license board I will submit it to them at once. I will then have some interesting proposals to make to you. If the film can be booked through a certain outlet (I'm now thinking in terms of being your distributor) I may soon be able to offer you a substantial amount of money for these rights.

Whatever you ask me to keep confidential will be kept strictly so. But if, later, you have something of that nature to impart be sure not to forget to mention that it is confidential.

Best wishes for success.

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.

K. A.
Hollywood.

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7 February, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

Let's lay off of Western Union. . . Look—if you had written me about the film, intead of telegraphing, you'd have received the money by the same mail that it went to you and you'd be richer by five bucks and change. . . I'm not worried about how or when I will get my money's worth out of the small sum I sent you because I know that you have the money and will use it. But laying out two dollars and change this morning for a telegram about something that doesn't seem urgent, annoyed me because that money can do nobody any good: it is simply lost and will be reduced to a part of a mill in the annual financial report of Western Union.

As to "Meta-Irony" of course I want it. . . I want to see every film made by film artists. I will gladly pay shipping charges on any film sent to me. I have one outlet through which I can book, possibly twenty screenings at no less than $25.00 each for the artist. I have in mind the setting up of another outlet where films can be sold to collectors, rented to owners of home projectors, furnishing the artist with a year in year out bread and butter income from films. . . But I am not a magician. I can't take any and every film sent to me and turn it into a gold mine at once. It may be a few years before there can be any substantial realization of my ideas. . . And I can do nothing unless people send films to me.

On Tuesday last week I saw a short film by a Belgian. It was made during the time of Avant Garde films, when he was seventeen. It was as good as any of the avant gard films I had seen, that is in consideration of the age of its maker. On Wednesday night I saw Cinema 16's program of films by artists. It left me with the feeling that I would have to change my plans again, since I will not operate unless there is a pronounced distinction between my work and theirs. On Friday I screened your film for myself alone. . . I felt that there is noting in it to distinguish it from the films being exhibited by Cinema 16.

You may be surprised at what I will write now: Today I feel that I should turn your film over to Cinema 16 and propose that they book it for an early showing. . . This means that I am thinking about abandoning film exhibition, except for ideas

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that I still have which will distinguish my work from theirs. Further, there are many other ways for me to find an outlet for my interest in the films, many other ways that I can contribute to the movement. I can devote all of my interests to distribution of films and through distribution be far more valuable to film-makers. . . What do you think? Shall I, if I still feel this way when I hear from you in reply, submit your film to Cinema 16? Or shall I return it to you. . . Of course meanwhile I will not show it to anyone.

Escape Episode cannot be used in the other outlet (twenty bookings). Nor can I use it in the foundation of the collector and rental outlet. I hope you may be able to accept this with good will. Perhaps I can do something with it after I get set up. But I cannot do a thing about getting money out of it now. . . And I hope that this will not prejudice you against letting me see the other films that you make. . . I know what I am about, and I know what kind of material I have to have, and I know it may take a lot more time to get what I need and to get going.

About the money I have sent you. . . It does not put you under obligation to me in any way. Nor is there any urgency about my getting it back. . . If you are willing to let me try to get Cinema 16 to book Escape Episode I might thereby recover the money I laid out on it. On the other hand I may decide, yet, to book it and show it myself. Just now I want to know how you feel about my turning it over to them.

Doubtless it appears to you that my vacillation indicates a strange character. I won't deny it. But on the other hand, thinking of your artist being destroyed by his art, I wonder what sort of a film could be made out of my fantastic life. . . We have had lengthly correspondence and I feel friendly toward you, so I feel like giving you some indications of what is behind all of this. . .

When I announced Cinearts Theatre it was because there was an unfilled need for such a theatre and I had the interest, the time, and separate security of an easily earned competence. That was late last spring. I had some freedom and no intimate associate, which was also a factor. . . Several months later (or was it weeks) Cinema 16 was announced and though it did not at first fill the need that I had felt they are now giving signs that they will. A month ago something happened which changed

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another condition of my thinking of starting the theatre, and at the same time another condition began to develop which reveals that my security and competence are jeopardized.

Today it may be that I will still have a theatre, maybe not. But in bringing all the loose ends of my life together I will work with films by artists, if I can gain their cooperation. The basis of recovering material security is, I hope, by establishing outlets for films which will be worth while to the artists and yield me a living.

So it is very important for me to make every contact that I can in this field that is just beginning to be born. I need to see as many films as I can. And when I have films that I can realize money from the artists will have money from me. . . I hope you will encourage others to send films to me. . . I can have them booked by Cinema 16, if that seems the best to do with them. I can submit them to the other outlet, if they are suitable, and make terms with the artist in a reasonable time after I receive the film. And the suitable ones can be used as a foundation for the establishment where they will be offered for sale and rental.

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.

PS: Save your money—write, don't telegraph.

126 West 10th St., New York 14, N.Y.
6 September, 1948

Dear Kenneth Anger,

It has been six months since I was waked from my slumber one morning (that I don't easily forget) to read your telegram about the first absolute film, "Meta-Irony". Then you wrote to me and told me about it generally, confidentially. Since then I have heard nothing about it from you, or from the grape-vine. . . I wonder. . . And Honestly I was interested.

Although it was not then a sacrifice for me to advance you the small amount I sent on that account and the money advanced to you on the prospect of exhibiting Escape Episode (which I could not exhibit because the license board would not have

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passed it as you sent it to me, and you would not tolerate cutting or changing it in any way) I could very well use that money today. I wonder if it would be convenient for you to send me some, or all of it. I would greatly appreciate it.

And I wish you would write and tell me how you are progressing with films. . . I am sorry to say that though I am tempted to try again to set up as an exhibitor of the films of artists I am deterred by thoughts of the money and time I lost and of my trials of being the middle man between artists and censor. Probably I will not try again.

As for making films I am still waiting for a better understanding of what I really want to do. . . Fortunately I have other interests and activities.

With best wishes for your success,

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.

K. A.
Hollywood.

128 West 10 Street, N.Y. 14, N.Y.
24 January 1949

Dear Kenneth Anger:

Now it is a year since I advanced you a total of $65.00 toward making a film (in which I am interested), and exhibiting another (which would not be licensed by the State Board of Review). . . I need money quite sorely now, and I wonder if you could return some or all of it.

If you could not send me any money it would do something toward restoring my faith in mankind if you would send me film in an equal amount. You listed the sale price of Drastic Demise as $25.00. If you had this and another film that you could charge at $40.00 this would settle the account and I would feel that I have something in repayment.

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This letter is not in the vein I'd wish to write. . . I'm interested in whatever you may be doing with films and I would be glad to hear from you.

Faithfully,

Paul Johnston.